



Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan



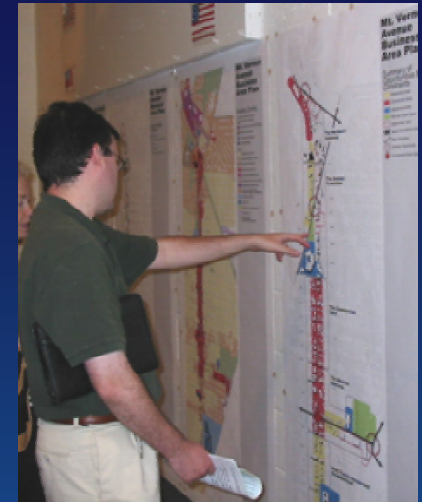
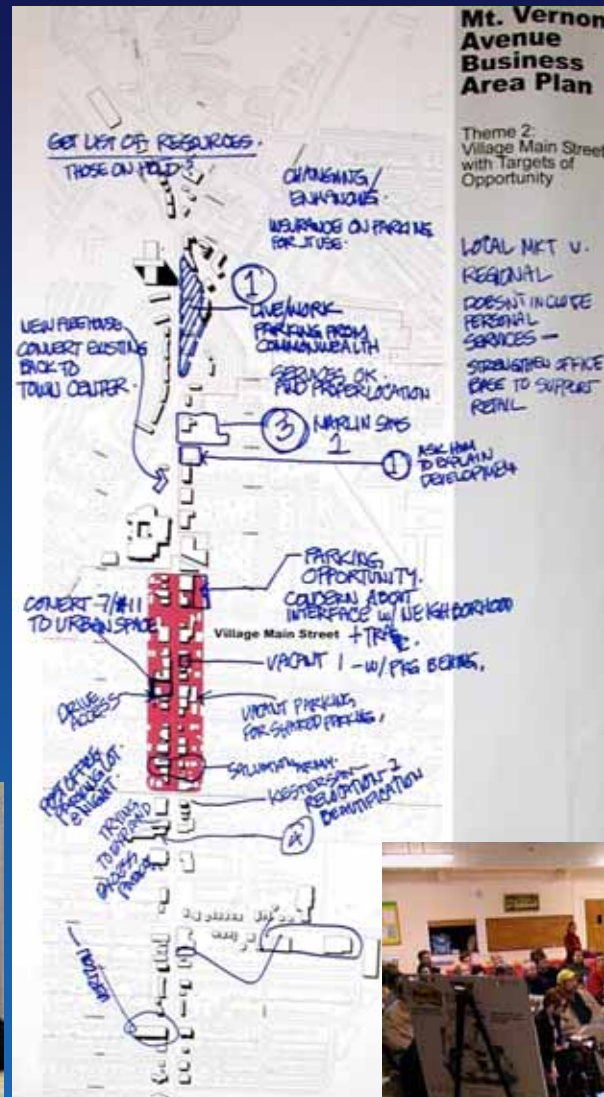
*Planning Commission Meeting
March 1, 2005*

Introduction

Primary study area

Mt. Vernon Avenue from
Nelson Ave to Herbert Street

**16 month collaborative
planning process** involving
residents, business people and
community representatives;
including 3 community meetings



Mission Statement

Mount Vernon Avenue is a vibrant and welcoming Main Street that reflects the surrounding neighborhoods' diversity, integrity and small-town charm. The Avenue is comprised of enthusiastic, successful and responsible community partners. We offer an eclectic and friendly living, working and shopping environment for Alexandrians and visitors alike.

*There is still a Main Street....
It's called the Avenue*



Guiding Principles



Use building form design guidelines to ensure compatible new development

Celebrate the "Town of Potomac Historic District"

Strengthen pedestrian connections and enhance the retail environment

Maintain the historic Main Street character

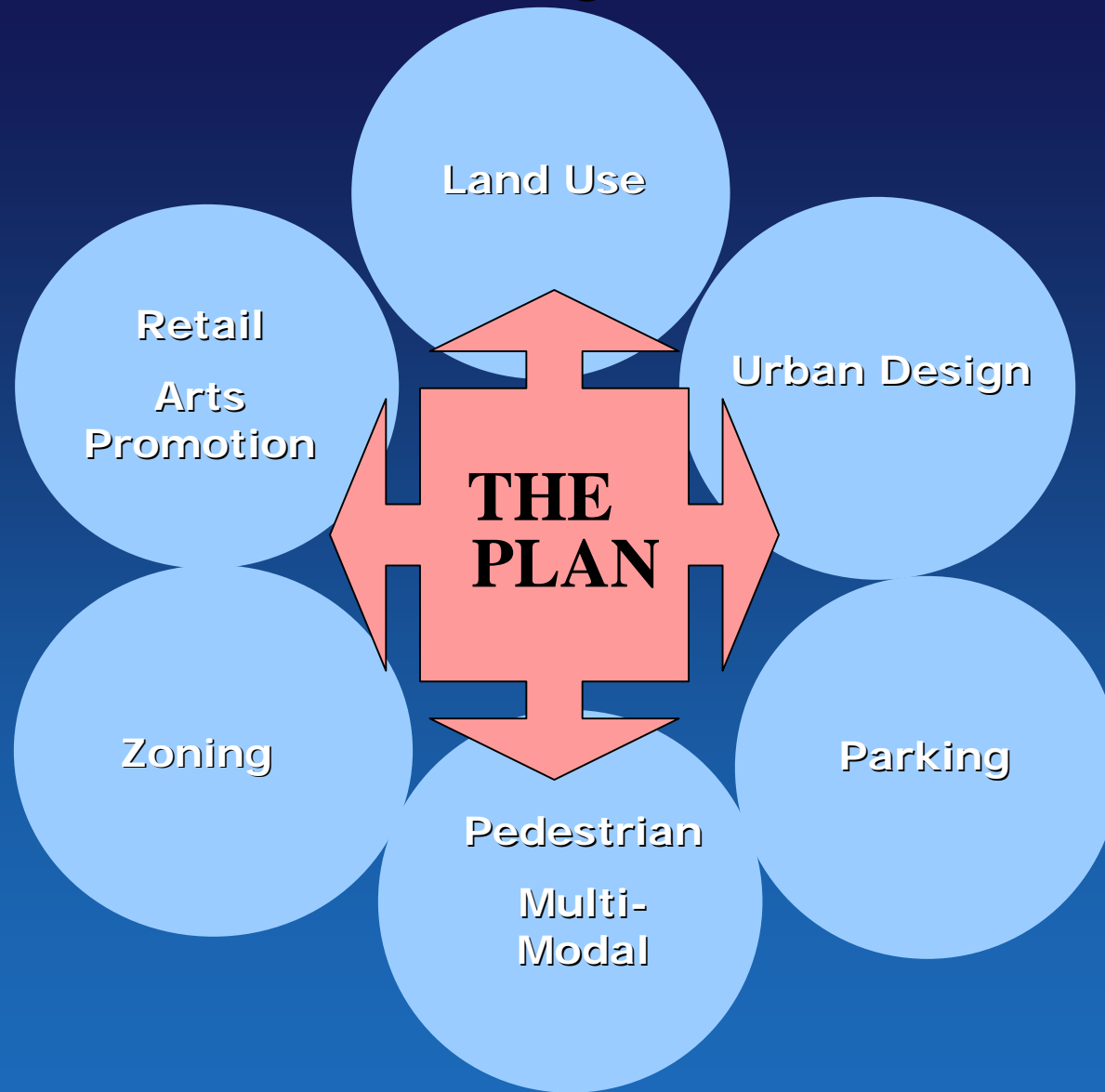


Encourage and support mixed-use development

Provide parking & transportation solutions to support retail uses



Strategies



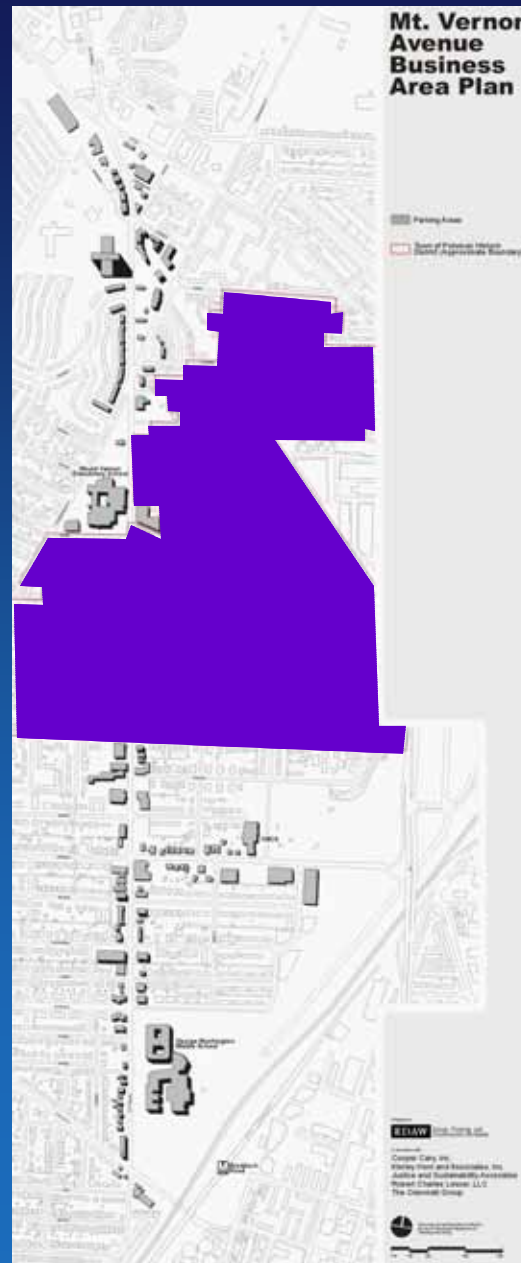


Land Use Strategy

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Avenue-Wide Recommendations

- **Promote Appropriate Infill Development**
 - Retain historic buildings
 - Maintain historic character and scale
 - Provide open space
- **Protect Residential Neighborhoods**
 - Lower building height near residences
 - Provide buffer between commercial and residential properties
- **Discourage Large Lot Consolidation**



- **Enhance Pedestrian Streetscape**
 - Pedestrian lighting on sidewalk
 - Enhance visual appearance of service and auto-related uses
 - Improve sidewalks with pavers and/or landscaping or both
- **Encourage a Mix of Uses**
 - Enhance the vibrant "Main Street" with a mix of uses including retail, residential, office and service

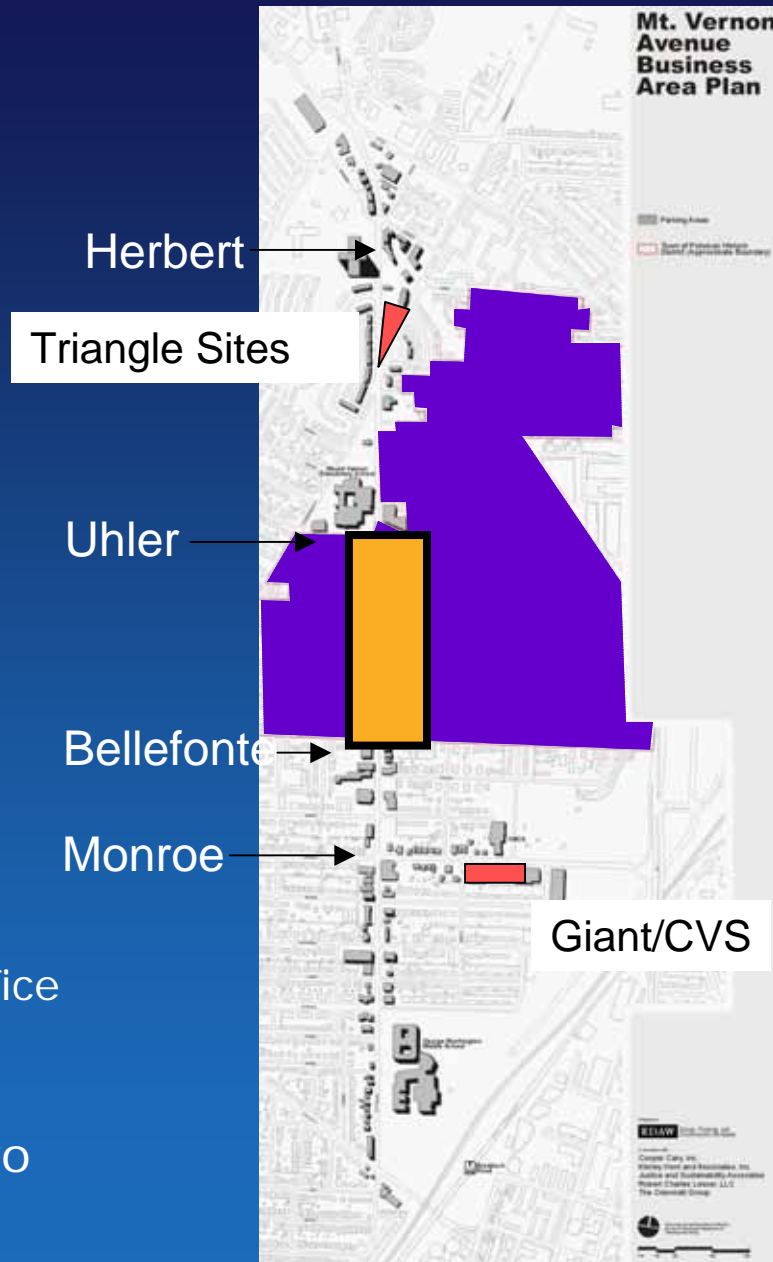
Commonwealth District

- Encourage Mixed Use
- Coordinated redevelopment of Triangle Sites – residential or office with some retail
- Improve streetscape

Monroe Gateway

- Vision for Giant/CVS - retail grocery/pharmacy uses with residential or office
- Improve Gateway Park
- Enhance access to Metro Station

Districts



Historic Core

- Retail Focus Area- target ground floor retail uses
- Preserve historic character
- Create a Town Square

Public Gathering Space

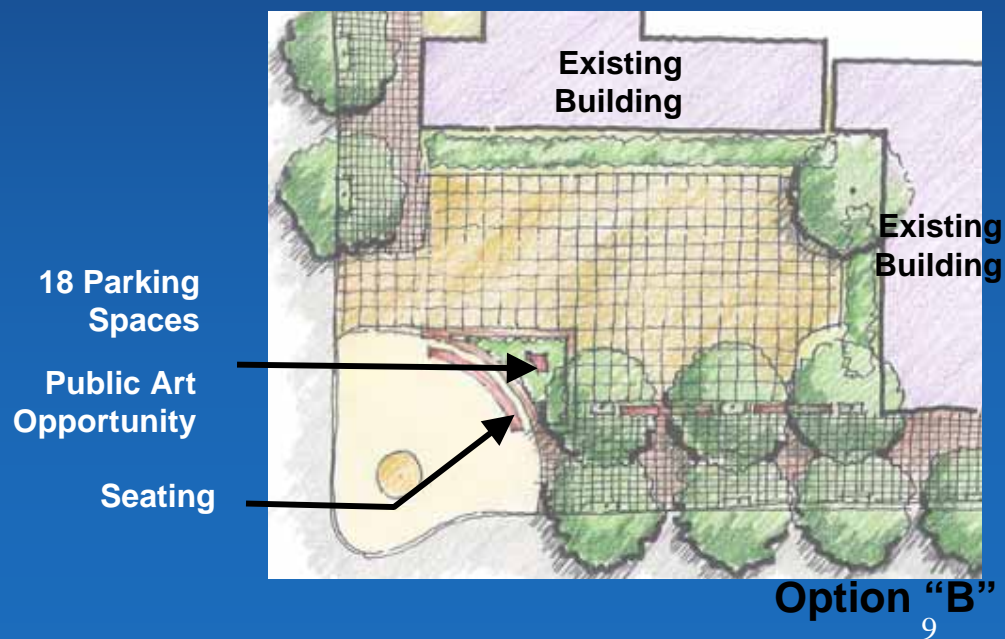
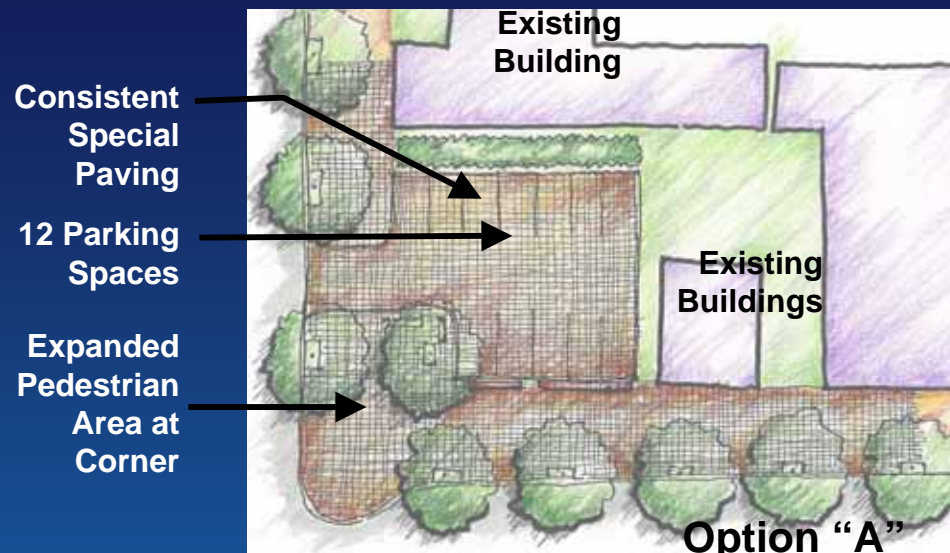
Create an attractive and flexible public gathering space

Option A: Redesign existing city parking lot and sidewalks at Mt. Vernon Avenue and Oxford

Option B: Redesign and expand existing city parking lot to the south (acquire parcel to the south)

Design Features

- Create flexible space that can serve daily gathering area, parking needs and special events
- Provide seating – benches and low walls
- Implement improved paving material
- Opportunity for public art





Urban Design

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Building Form Design Guidelines

Buildings define the street

Curb cuts discouraged on Mount Vernon Avenue



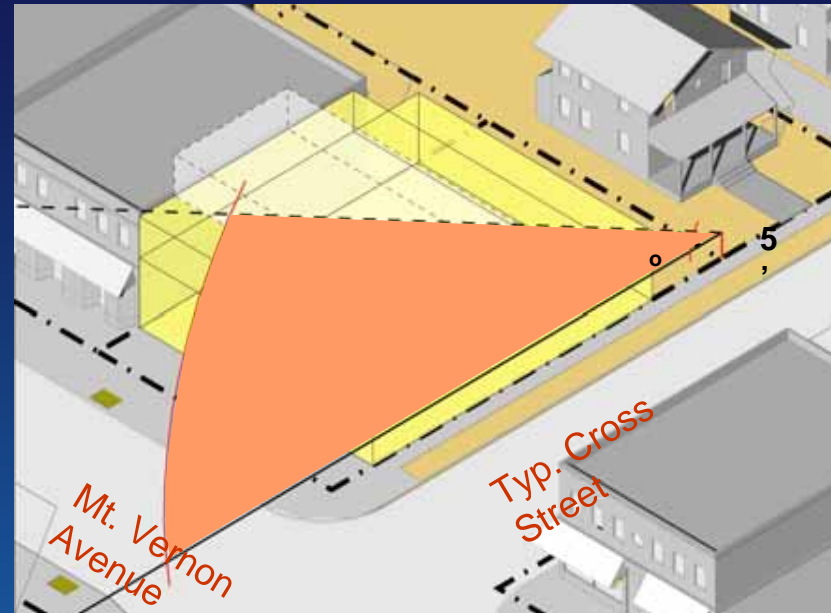
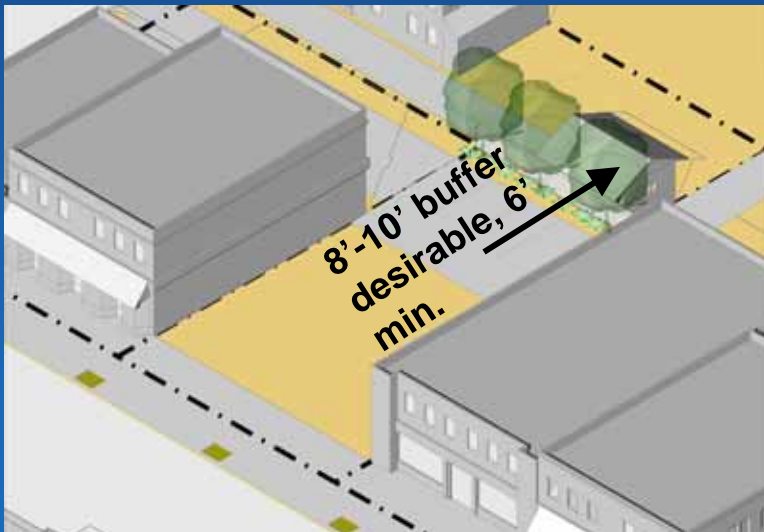
New retail storefronts should wrap corners



New construction compatible with existing mass and scale



Parking behind buildings, access from side street or alley



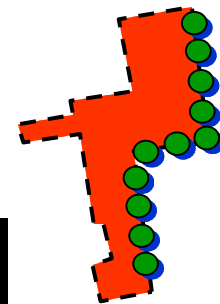
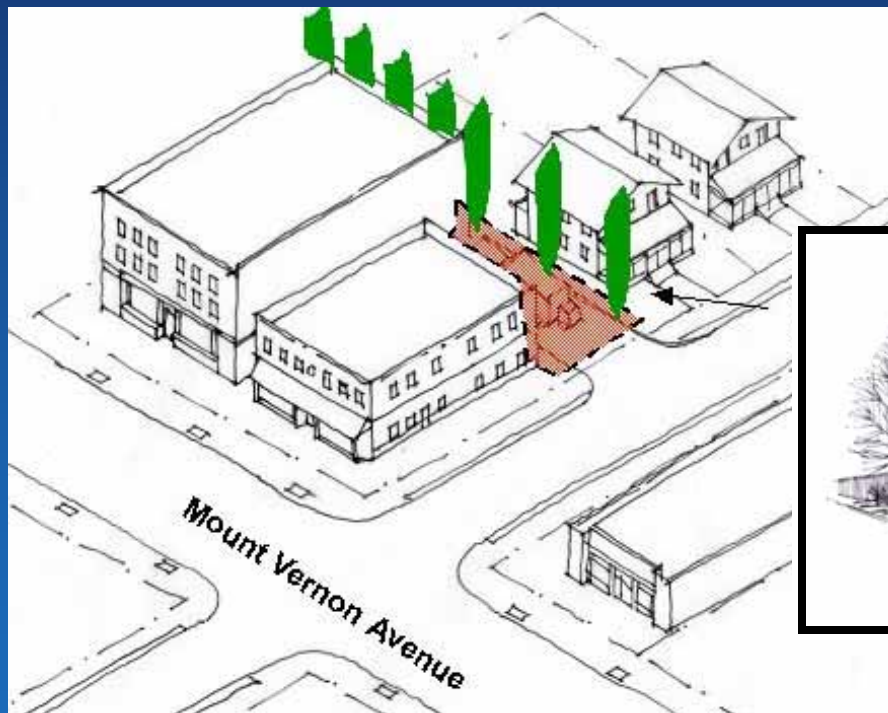
Guidelines shape building form and scale for new construction include:

Building setback, height, lot coverage, buffers, roof forms, building massing

Ensure Protection of Residential Neighborhoods

Step buildings to minimize impact on adjoining residential

Provide buffer/screening options to mitigate visual impact of commercial





Parking Strategy

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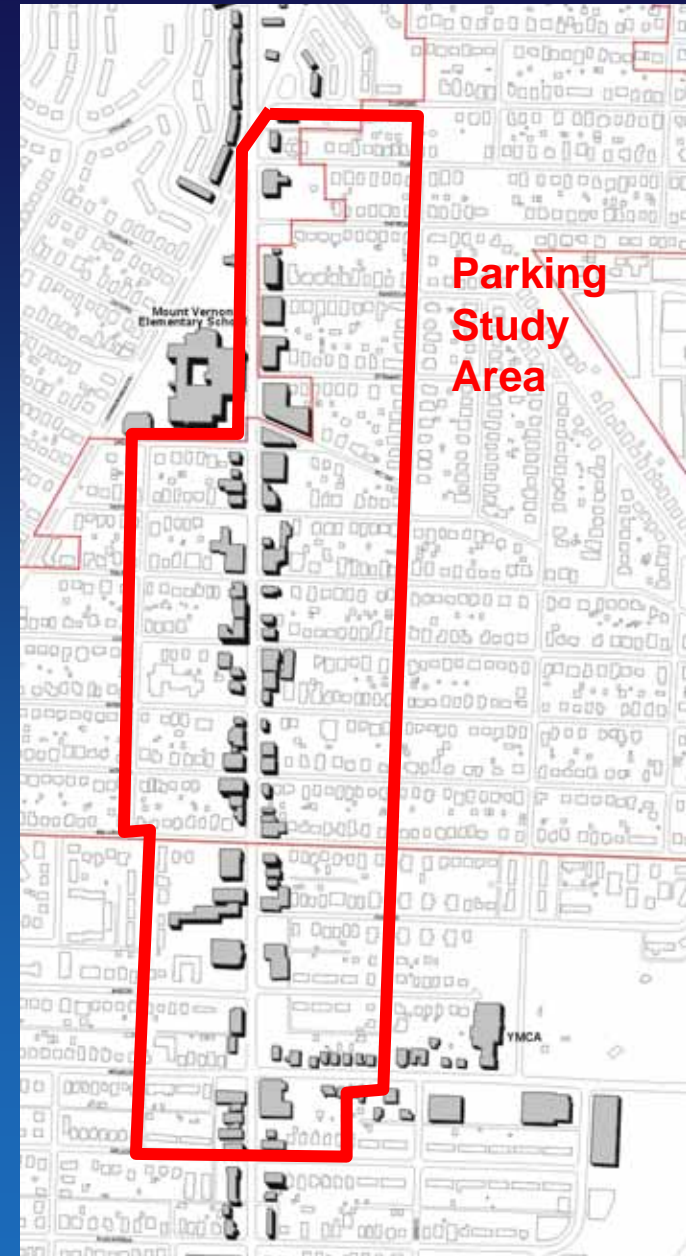
Parking Study

Current Parking Utilization and Demand

- 460 +/- usable spaces on Avenue (select private lots, residential streets within one block of Avenue)
- 140-262 unused spaces (30-60%) in core depending on day/time
- 40-70% unused spaces located in private lots

Parking Supply and Demand in Balance

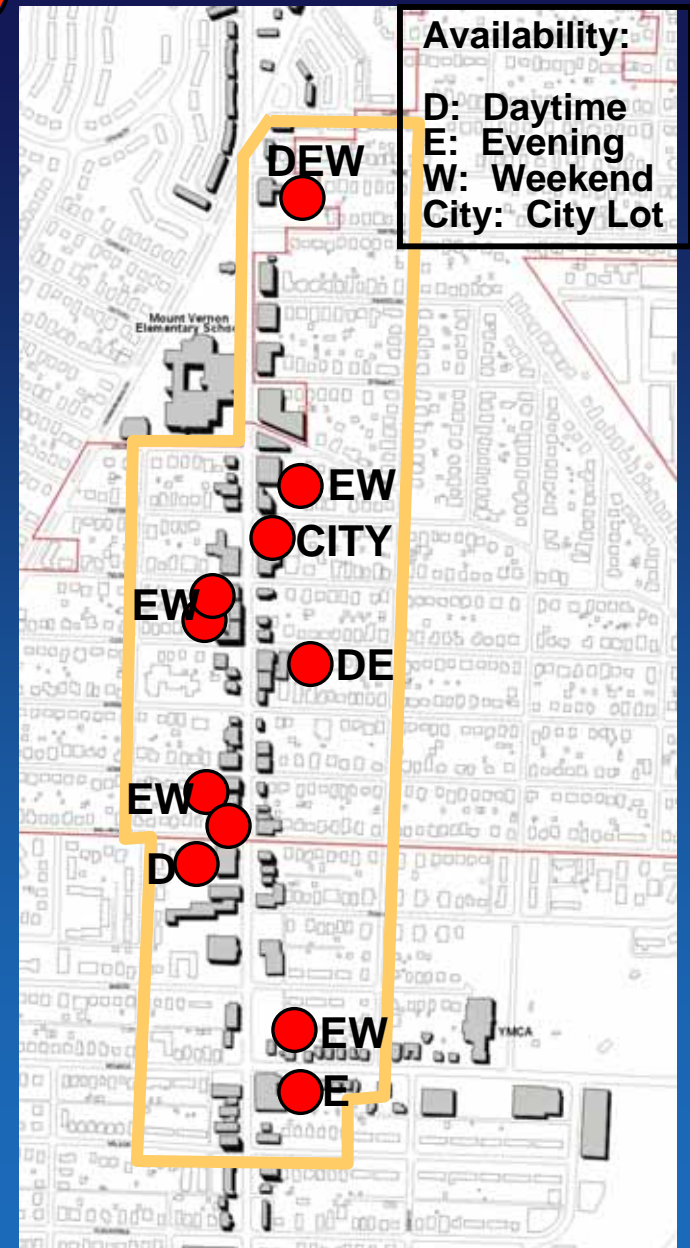
As change and new construction occur, allow flexibility in parking while maintaining an overall balance



Parking Strategy

Shared parking program

- Parking study evaluated 10 sites identified as having available parking
- Opportunity to capitalize on underutilized lots, particularly during nights and weekends, when on-street demand is highest
- Use private lots for employee parking to allow customers to park on Avenue and afford greater turnover of spaces for customers
- Implementation Issues: compensation, liability, maintenance, lighting, education, signage
- Organization to address issues, monitor parking, promote shared parking program



Provide flexible parking requirements for retail uses

Establish parking reduction policy

Monitor parking utilization and determine when additional parking strategies are necessary to meet increased demand



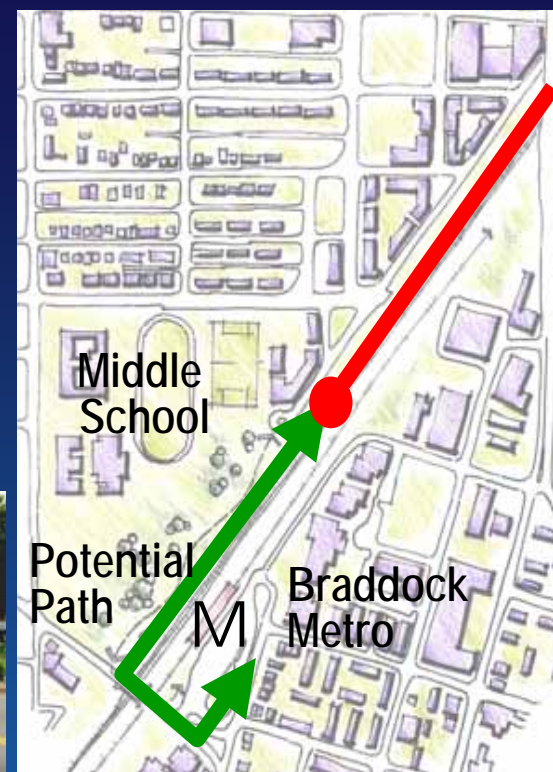


Pedestrian/Multi-Modal Strategy

Enhance Transit and Pedestrian Environment

Safer Pedestrian Connections

- Braddock Rd Metro
- Enhance access to existing (and future) trails
- Streetscape/Lighting



Transit Ridership

- DASH service
- Benches, Shelters, Schedules
- Promote alternative forms of transportation to the Avenue



Reduce Speeding/Increase Pedestrian Safety on Mt. Vernon by changing the 4-lane section between Commonwealth Avenue and Glebe Road to 2 lanes



Zoning Strategy



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Overlay Zone

Retain historic structures while allowing infill using building form design guidelines

CDD Sites:

- Increase FAR to 1.25 for mixed-use coordinated development
- Specific site design guidelines
- 2 ½ to 3 stories in height, with stepdowns
- 25% ground level open space
- On-site affordable housing units

CDD #13 Triangle Sites

Retail Focus Area

- ground floor retail & restaurant uses
- residential & office on upper floors

CDD #14 Giant/CVS

Overlay Zone:

- Waive CL Zone with SUP – FAR, yards, etc for new form-based buildings
- Admin SUP uses:
 - Restaurants
 - Outdoor dining
 - Outdoor garden center
 - Outdoor display
 - Live theater
- Modified parking requirements
- Reduced parking and open space for smaller lots

Mt. Vernon Avenue Urban Overlay Zone

Ensure preservation of historic character, mass and scale through building form and design guidelines

Existing CL zoning remains as underlying zone as to FAR limitations

With SUP, to apply for form based development approval:

- New construction must be 1,000 sf or greater
- Historic buildings > 750 sf must be retained
- Lot consolidation to achieve greater development is strongly discouraged

- **Tier 1** = Lots of 7,000 sf or less

- Waiver of open space and parking requirements for land-locked lots; some parking required for corner lots and lots with rear access

- **Tier 2** = Lots of 7,001 sf to 15,000 sf

- 15% minimum ground level open space
- Reduce parking by up to half with SUP
- 1 space per residential unit

- **Tier 3** = Lots greater than 15,000 sf

- 25% minimum ground level (publicly visible) open space
- On-site parking to meet requirement
- Massing and open space requirements to ensure compatibility

Parking Flexibility in Overlay Zone

Provide flexible parking requirements for new retail uses and small compatible infill development

- **Waive parking requirements for:**
 - Change in use from office and/or personal service to retail
 - Outdoor dining
 - Outdoor food and crafts markets
 - New mixed use development on land-locked lots of less than 7,000 sf
- **Where cannot provide, reduce parking requirements:**
 - Up to 50% for lots of 7,001 to 15,000 sf
 - For small corner lots
- **No reduction for tear downs of existing buildings**
- **Require SUP parking reduction to reduce parking for:**
 - Any use other than retail that does not comply with current parking requirement
- **Other changes:**
 - Allow 1 space for each new residential unit



Create CDD #13 – Triangle Sites

Desired uses

- Residential and/or office
- Modest ground floor retail

Modest increase in FAR with performance standards (1.25)

- Provide mix of building typology
- Building mass and scale complement existing Avenue character
- Building steps down to residences beyond Commonwealth Avenue
- Usable public open space at corner
- Underground parking from Commonwealth Avenue



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Create CDD #14 – Giant/CVS

Desired uses

- Grocery and pharmacy uses
- Residential or office above

Modest increase in FAR with performance standards (1.25)

- Building mass and scale compatible with area
- Protect adjacent residences with building step backs, breaks in building massing, and rear buffers
- Coordinate internal streets and open space with the existing neighborhood and Potomac Yard
- Ground level usable open space
- Underground parking





Market/Retail Strategy



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Market Study/Strategy

Demand for approx. 10% additional “Main Street” retail/restaurant space by 2010

- Unique and eclectic stores not competing with larger chain stores
- Strongest demand is for restaurants
- Also demand for Convenience Goods and Home Furnishings stores.

Target complementary businesses:

- *Restaurants*
 - Diner, family-style restaurant, and restaurant with entertainment and/or arts component
- *Specialty foods*
 - Gourmet foods, meat/fish market, confectionaries
- *Home furnishings*
 - Stores offering unique products not available elsewhere
- *Antiques/art galleries*
- *Art supplies*



Arts Strategy

Promote the Arts along Mt. Vernon Avenue

- Partner w/ local arts groups (i.e., Del Ray Artisans, Art League, etc.) to promote arts
- Establishing art studios, either in a single building, or dispersed along the Avenue
- Public art
- More festivals and arts promotions



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Retail Design Strategy

Good design increases consumer interest and creates a unique community identity

Facade and Landscaping Improvements

- Signage, painting, and architectural enhancements
- More landscaping between storefronts and sidewalks
- Encourage store window lighting in evening hours



Outdoor Restaurant Seating

- Creates vitality along the street

Building Design Guidelines

- Preferred width of a storefront is 20 to 30', maximum of 50'
- Minimum depth of a retail store to be 40', or the depth of the building if less than 40'



Implementation

Strengthen and Capitalize on Partnerships

- **City of Alexandria**
 - Implement capital improvements in partnership with private property improvements
 - Explore with PWBA the creation of a business improvement district
 - Provide tech assistance with façade improvements
 - Develop and implement with PWBA/BID a shared parking strategy
 - Services to strengthen existing businesses
- **Potomac West Business Association (PWBA)**
 - Market the Avenue
 - Support programming of the Avenue
 - Explore with the City the creation of a BID
 - Work with the City on a shared parking program
- **Neighborhood Groups**
 - Support businesses and activities
 - Support plan and plan implementation
- **Alexandria Economic Development Partnership**
 - Market the Avenue
 - Implement façade improvement program
- **Small Business Development Center**
 - Assist with development of business plans
 - Services to strengthen existing businesses





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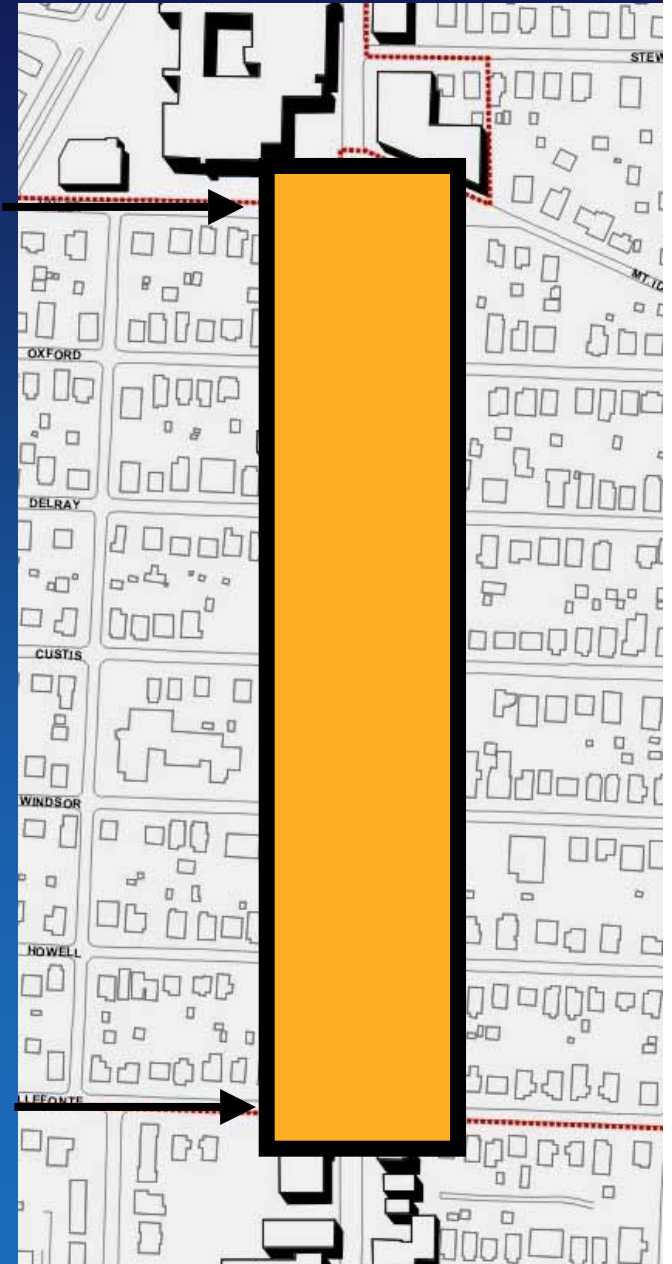
Historic Core

Key Recommendations

- **Encourage Street-Level Retail**
 - Designate Retail Focus Area – Uhler to Bellefonte Avenue
- **Preserve Historic Character**
 - Ensure new development is compatible by using a form approach that defines the volume, mass, and scale of new buildings
- **Create a Public Gathering Space**
- **Protect Adjacent Residences**

Uhler

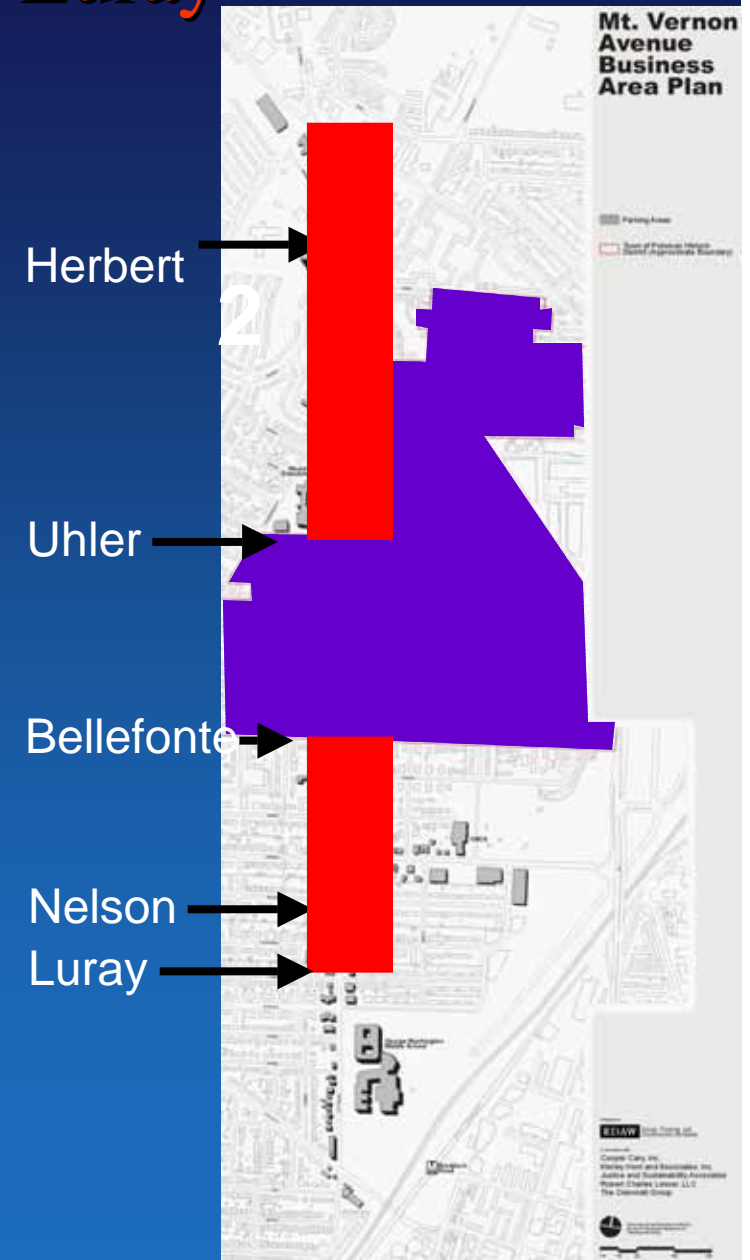
Bellefonte



Uhler to Herbert & Bellefonte to Luray

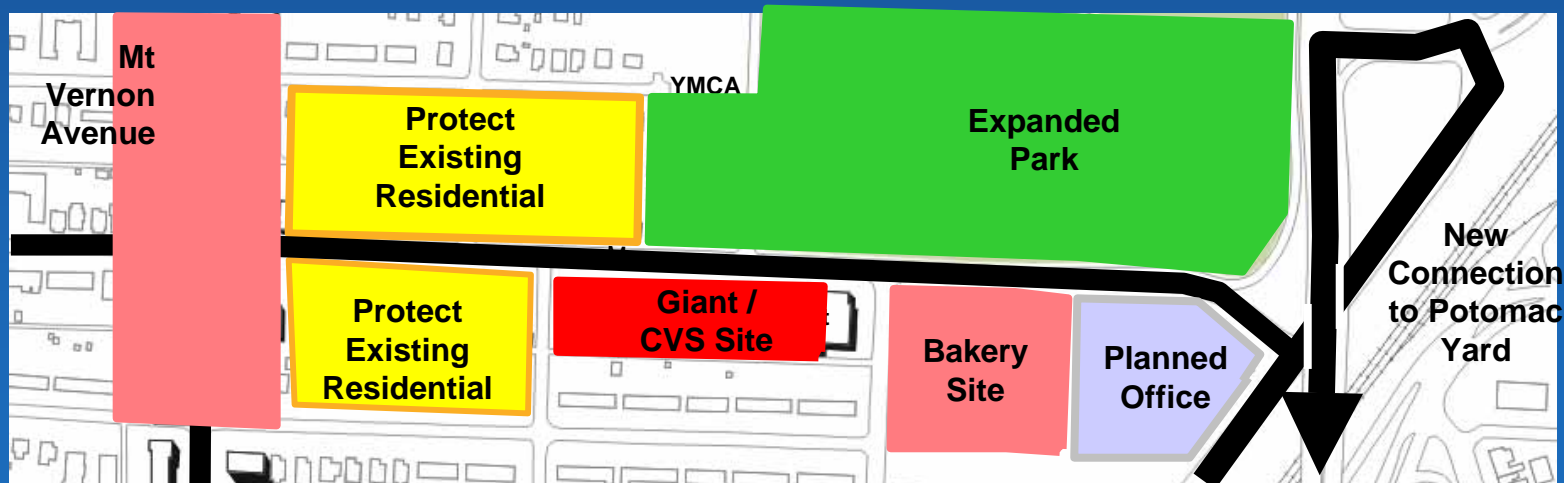
Key Recommendations

- Encourage a Mix of Uses
- Improve Streetscape/Sidewalk Improvements and Open Space
- Promote Coordinated Redevelopment at Triangle Sites
- Encourage Façade and Site Enhancements
- Improve Pedestrian Connections to Metro
- Encourage Compatible Infill



Monroe Avenue Gateway

- Retain CVS/Giant
- Create a gateway into Del Ray in coordination with the Route 1 Bridge improvements
- Protect and enhance the residential areas along Monroe Avenue
- Strengthen linkages to Braddock Road Metro station in coordination with the Route 1 Improvements
- Establish a vision for future use and development of Giant/ CVS Site
- No change proposed for the office building located immediately adjacent to the Giant



Giant/CVS

Desired uses

- Grocery store with pharmacy
- Other retail uses on ground floor
- Residential and/or office on upper floors



Allow modest increase in FAR (1.25) with SUP and compliance with performance standards

- Building height limited to three stories with stepdowns to ensure compatibility with scale of adjacent buildings and residential to the south
- Ground level public usable open space
- Underground parking
- On-site affordable housing
- Architectural quality

Triangle Sites

Desired uses

- Residential and/or office
- Modest ground floor retail

Allow modest increase in FAR (1.25) with SUP and compliance with performance standards:

- Limit height to 3 stories on Mt. Vernon Avenue, stepping down to residences on Commonwealth
- Provide consolidated, visible ground level open space
- Complement existing Avenue character in building design
- Construct underground structured parking
- Provide on-site affordable housing

